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LODI DRUG TRAFFICKER SENTENCED TO MORE THAN 18 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON

Judge Imposes Long Sentence on Large-Scale Methamphetamine Dealer Ernesto Manuel Aguila

SACRAMENTO—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that ERNESTO MANUEL AGUILA, 26, of Lodi, was sentenced on March 7, 2008 by United States District Judge Garland E. Burrell to 222 months, or more than 18 years in federal prison. The defendant pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute more than 50 grams of methamphetamine on May 4, 2007.

This case is the product of an extensive joint investigation by the San Joaquin Metropolitan Narcotics Task Force (METRO) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

According to Assistant United States Attorney Jason Hitt, who prosecuted the case, AGUILA admitted in his plea agreement that he engaged in large-scale methamphetamine distribution in the Lodi area between August 31, 2005, and October 11, 2005. AGUILA admitted that he personally supplied methamphetamine to one of his distributors, codefendant SCOTT ALLEN YARBOROUGH, during drug deals conducted by METRO and DEA agents on August 31, 2005, September 21, 2005, and October 11, 2005. All three drug deals occurred in the community of Lodi. YARBOROUGH pleaded guilty in January 2006 and was sentenced to 70 months in April 2006.

The investigation culminated in a federal search warrant served at AGUILA's Lodi residence on November 3, 2005. In his home, agents discovered more than four pounds of high-purity methamphetamine, a loaded .22 caliber pistol, a bullet proof vest, and more than \$12,000 in drug trafficking proceeds. As part of his plea agreement, AGUILA agreed to forfeit all right, title, and interest in a 2004 Honda Accord used during the drug deals in this investigation.

In sentencing AGUILA to 222 months in federal prison, Judge Burrell found that the harsh sentence was appropriate to punish his crimes and protect the community.

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